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THE  
CARRUTHERS FAMILY.

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AN INTERESTING RECORD.

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BY THE VERY REV. JOHN GILLESPIE,  
LL.D.





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# THE CARRUTHERS FAMILY.

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AN INTERESTING RECORD.

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The founder of this family was one Ruther, who is believed to have come to this country at the time of the Norman conquest, and to have settled at a place called Carruthers in the parish of Middlebie. He built a fort there on the height above the site of the ancient hamlet of Carruthers, and to this fort was given the name of Caer-ruthers (from the Saxon name Caer, a fort), that is the fort or stronghold of Ruther. At the time surnames were adopted this came to be that of the family, and it is found under a variety of forms, such as Carruyers, Carrudders, Caerruthers, Carruthers, etc. Carruthers was a separate parish until 1609, when it, with Middlebie and Pennersax, were united into one parish. The property of Carruthers seems to have remained in the possession of the family for a comparatively short period, for we find it ere long owned by the Earl of Bothwell.

However, so early as 1306, Robert Bruce gave a charter to Thomas, son of John de Carruthers, of the lands of Musfolds (Mouswald) called Tretwayts. The same king gave the same Thomas a further grant of lands in the valley of the Annan which belonged to Robert de Applingden in right of his wife, Johanna, daughter of the said Robert de Applingden, on payment at Lochmaben of one penny at the festival of John the Baptist. This was no doubt some place celebrated for its apple trees, probably about Applegarth, which means an enclosure of apple trees. Thus the family settled at



Mouswald at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and shortly thereafter built the old tower at Mouswald Place, the remains of which are still standing. This continued to be the residence and headquarters of the chiefs of the family for nearly three centuries. The property was apparently not an extensive one at first, but it was frequently added to by grants from successive sovereigns until the possessions of the family were not only numerous and extensive, but were also situated in all parts of Annandale. About a quarter of a century after the family settled at Mouswald the Holmains branch of the family was founded, the history of which we shall trace by-and-by.

The first accession was made in 1349, when David II, as Lord of Annandale, gave a charter to William de Carruthers of the lands of Middleby and patronage of said church, then in the hands of the Crown by the forfeiture of Thomas de Linde-ay, who had taken part with the English against his natural sovereign David II. Another large addition was made in 1411, when Archibald Earl of Douglas, Lord of Galloway and Annandale, gave to Simon de Carruthers of Mouswald, his shield bearer, a grant of the following lands:—Lands of Mouswald, Middleby, and Dornock, with the patronage of the said parish churches; the lands of Hetland Hill, Logan tenement, Hodholm (Hoddom), Tunyrgath (Tundergarth, Westwood, and Rocklif, all holden of the granter, and rendering as follows, viz., Mouswald, Hetland Hill, and Logan tenement, three silver pennies yearly, and for the rest the services use and wont. The place called Logan tenement in this charter was in the neighbourhood of Moffat, and comprised the farms of Craigbeck, Breconside, Logan Woodhead, Logan Woodfoot, and Crofthead. The estate was called the Procornal or Logan, and on it are still to be seen the remains of a small keep called the Cornal Tower.

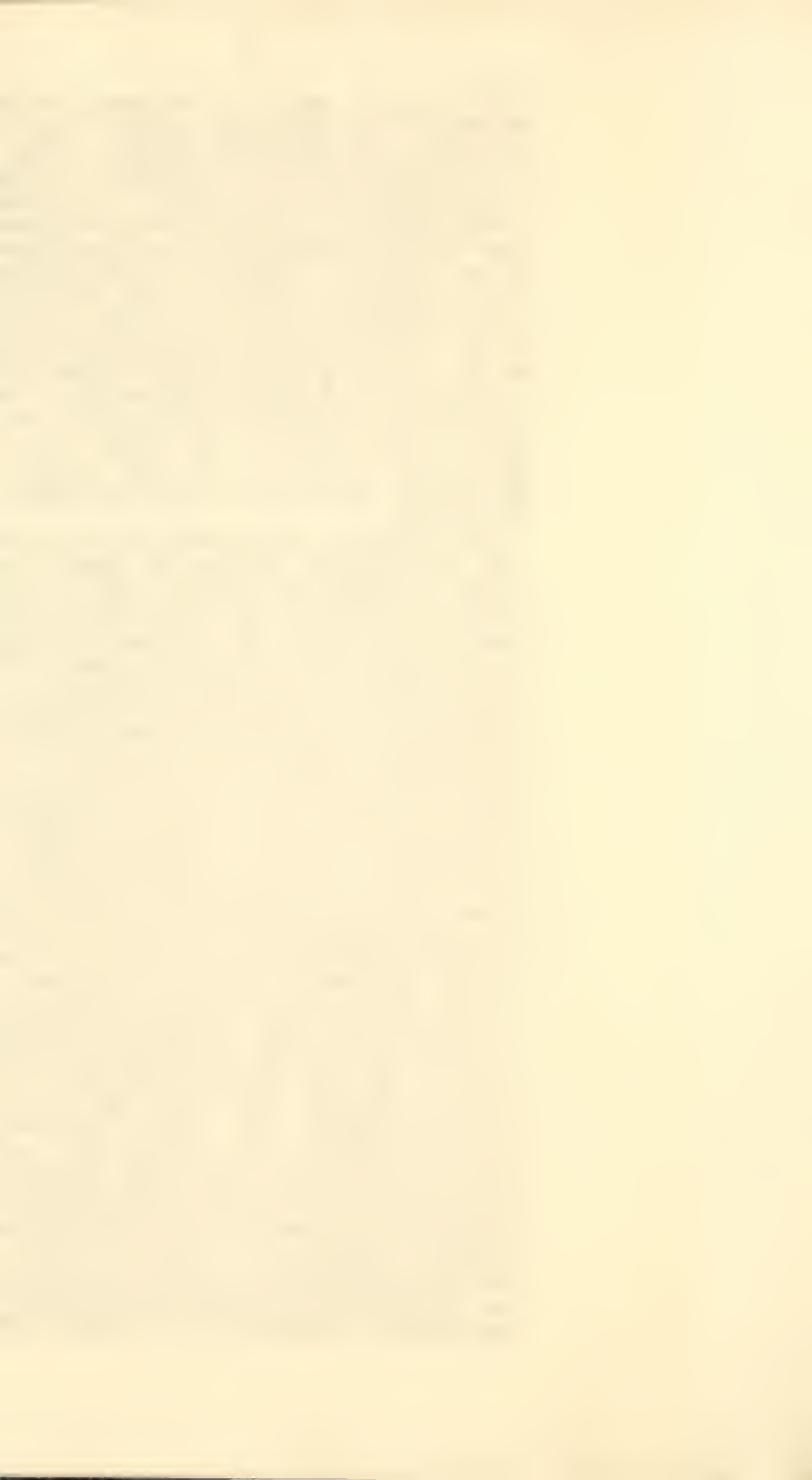
From a deed dated 31st August, 1439, we learn that John de Carruthers, laird of Mouswald, had lent John Halliday of Hodholm the sum of £10 when the latter was in



difficulties, or, as it is expressed in the document, "in his grete myser," and in consequence thereof John Halliday wadsets (a Scotch law term for a mortgage or pledge of real property) to Carruthers his lands called Holcroft, a cotelaud, which was sometime William of Johnstone's, and two oxgang of land which is called the Tynkler's lands in the tenement of Hodholm. In 1449 Elizabeth Dinwoodie, widow of Andrew de Carruthers, gave a grant to John de Carruthers of the lands of Hout-Quhat (How-what), Stammeras, and Wamfra, and this grant was confirmed by the King's license and consequent charter. Thus at this early date the family got possessions in the parish of Wamphray, where there is still a branch of the family.

The next step which falls to be noticed was an important one for the family, and shows the important position which it had attained. We have seen that one property after another had been acquired until they had possessions in Annandale from Moffat in the north to Dornock in the south. In 1452 these were consolidated by the erection of them into a barony, called the Barony of Carruthers or the barony of Mouswald. The charter constituting them into a barony was granted by James II. to John de Carruthers, and the only lands mentioned in it which are not specified in previous deeds are those of Cummertrees. It does not lie within the scope of the present paper to particularise the advantages which flowed from the erection of a property into a barony, but we may remark that they were very considerable.

John de Carruthers seems to have been succeeded by his son, Sir Simon Carruthers, who married a daughter of Douglas of Drumlaurig. He was Warden Defender of the western marches, and was killed at the battle of Kirtle in 1481. This is believed to have been the Sir Simon whose statue, composed of red freestone, is in the churchyard of Mouswald—his head pillowed, his feet on a lion, and his hands in the posture of supplication. There was also at one time in the same churchyard a statue of his wife, but the material of which it was formed being freestone or other stone of a light colour,





the villagers were animated by such a utilitarian spirit that they gradually broke it up and used it for ornamenting their hearth-stones and door-steps.

The next incident which calls for notice in the history of the family is rather of an amusing character, and will help to relieve the foregoing dry details. It was a sort of breach of promise of marriage case! We are apt to regard such processes as purely modern institutions; but they are not so, for there was a breach of promise case in the Carruthers family so long since as 400 years ago. The circumstances were these:—Simon de Carruthers, eldest son of Archibald de Carruthers of Mouswald, or—as he would be styled according to modern phraseology—Simon Carruthers, younger of Mouswald, was engaged to be married to Eufame (Eufamia), daughter of John Lord Carlyle, who resided in the castle of Torthorwald, and was the owner of the surrounding property. We do not know whether it was the custom in those times for young ladies' fathers to pay over to their prospective sons-in-law a portion of their daughters' dowry before the marriage took place, but at all events this was done in this particular instance, for Lord Carlyle paid to the father of the bridegroom 400 merks Scots, which is equivalent to £22 3s. sterling. But the father having died, the marriage, for some unexplained reason, did not take place, and Lord Carlyle raised an action against Mr Simon for repetition or repayment of the £22 3s. This may appear at the present day a small sum to make a fuss about, and indeed it may seem a small dowry for a Lord to give with his daughter. But that, relatively to the value of money in those days, Miss Carlyle was not "a penniless lass with a lang pedigree," may be inferred from the fact that upwards of a century and a quarter after this happened—viz., in 1617—the annual value of the whole of Annandale was less than four times that amount, or exactly £85 10s. Lord Carlyle sought only the repayment of his money, and did not sue the faithless young laird for any sum as solatium for his daughter's wounded feelings. Indeed, from



the fact that the pecuniary transaction was between the parents, and from what we know of the fashion of the times in these matters, it is probable the projected marriage was a purely family arrangement, and that there was no feeling in the matter. The case was three times before the Court, and at length, after the proverbial "law's delay," decret was given against the defender for the money.

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An addition was made to the Mouswald property in 1499 in the grant by Adam de Kykepatrick of Pennersax (Pennersaugh in Middlebie), with a precept of James IV. for passing a charter in favour of Simon de Carruthers of Mouswald and his heirs for the lands of Pennersax and patronage of the church. It was probably this grant which led to the murder of the Laird of Mouswald in 1504. The accused parties were Stephen Johnstone and Thomas Bell of Currie (probably one of the Bells of Middlebie clan). The Laird of Castlemilk became surety in £100 Scots—this is £8 6s 8d sterling—for the appearance of Bell. But when the day of trial came round neither of the accused parties appeared; consequently they were denounced at the bar as rebels, and the Laird of Castlemilk had to pay the amount lodged in security.

The last male member of the Mouswald family of Carruthers was Simon Carruthers, who died in 1548. He is believed to have been killed in a Border raid by the "Thevis of the Marche." He left two daughters but no son, and on the 13th August, 1548, at the Abbey of Haddington, Queen Mary granted by letter of gift, ward and marriage of his two daughters to Sir James Douglas of Drumlanrig. Questions arose whether the two daughters, Janet and Marion, became co-heiresses of the barony, or whether it passed under an entail executed in 1544 to the heir male, who is said at this time to have been John Carruthers of Woodfoot, near Moffat. A lawsuit ensued, in which Sir James Douglas was ultimately successful by bargaining for a small sum with the heir male, who probably could not carry on the contest, as appears from a subsequent deed. The entail was set aside and the young



ladies became co-heiresses, though, as events turned out, it would probably have been better for them had they lost the suit. Their guardian married in 1560 Janet, the elder of the sisters, to Thomas Rorison of Bardannoch, a neighbour laird, and at the time Douglas got the lady to make over to himself the half of Mouswald and the estates of Simon, her father. The reasons given in the deed for the lady relinquishing her property rather suggest a grasping intention on the part of the guardian, as they seem to have been inserted to give a plausible appearance to the transaction. The principal reasons assigned why she took the step are:—(1) That the property was in such a troublous country that her father got little profit out of it; (2) that he had been the means of defeating the heir male in the lawsuit; (3) that he had brought up her and her sister, having provided them with "meit, drink, and cleithing and other necessars her be the spaice of zeires bipast;" and (4) he had found her a husband in the person of Thomas Roreson, and had undertaken to secure for them the five pound land of Drumragane, with the pertinents lying in the parish of Glencairn besides, to pay with the said Janet in name of tocher to the said Roreson the sum of one thousand markis. In addition, he became bound to keep her, her husband, and servants for the space of two years after their marriage. Thomas Roreson, the gentleman selected as Janet Carruthers' husband, was forfeited for coining at Edinburgh in 1581, that is, 21 years after the marriage. Sir James Douglas got a confirmation from the Queen of the deed.

Her guardian kept the other sister in close custody. He offered her as a husband John M'Math, son and heir of Jamie M'Math of Dalpedder. She being possessed of more resolution and spirit than her sister Janet, refused to be married to the person offered to her as a husband. Douglas got her bound over in 1563 that she would not marry "ane traitor or outhter broken man of the country." She was much befriended by her uncle, Charles Murray of Cokpule, who resided at Comlongan. Harassed on every side by Sir James Douglas, she is said to have committed suicide by throwing herself over



the walls of the Castle of Comlongan. There was a tradition that there was an element of foul play in the case. Sir James Douglas became possessed of the second half of the barony of Mouswald, or of Carruthers, as it was variously termed, which explains the Drumlanrig branch of the Douglasses owning subsequently so much property in that part of the county.

We will return to the Holmendis family, who, in 1425, had got a confirmation of their charters. John de Carruthers got a Brief of Perambulation of the Lands of Blackwood in Ruthwell in 1476. Corrie of Corrie having joined the rebellious Earl of Douglas, who was defeated at Lochmaben in 1434, his estates were granted to Holmendis. Probably there was some limitation to the grant, as these lands were shortly afterwards restored to the family of Corrie, and, along with Newbie, carried into the family of Johnstone of Annandale, by a marriage with the heiress of the Corries. His son John married Blanche, daughter of Sir John Murray of Cockpule, about 1504. Their eldest son got a renewal of his charters under the Great Seal on 21st May, 1523, but he died early, and was succeeded by his brother George. In addition to the lands formerly mentioned in their charters, those of Altowne and Erischbank, or Archbank, near Moffat, and Copewood, in Dryfesdale, are included in these charters of 1523. The Moffat lands were, however, sold, or otherwise alienated, about 1546. In 1547, Holmendis submitted to the army of Henry VIII., which overran Annandale under Lord Wharton, and became bound to the English king's service with 162 men, on his estates. There was a third son, William, from whom the family of Carruthers of Dormont is believed to be descended. We do not know who George's wife was, but, in 1573, his son John married Nicholas, sister to Sir Alexander Jardine of Applegirth.

In 1585 John Carruthers of Holmendis was captain of a troop of cavalry, and his son Charles a cornet in Lord Maxwell's army, which went to Stirling. About 1597 John Carruthers granted Creive and Crossdykes





to Armstrong, son or nephew of the celebrated Kinmont Willie.

John Carruthers was succeeded by his son John, who married, in 1604, Agnes, daughter of George Douglas of Parkhead. Their second son James married Margaret, daughter of Sir James Lockhart of Lee, in 1635, and from the second son of this James the family of Carruthers of Denbie is descended. The eldest son of John and Miss Douglas married Helen, daughter of Sir John Grierson of Lag, and secondly, Margaret, daughter of Callender of Craigtown. His son George married a cousin from Denby, and their eldest son married Rachael, daughter of James Douglas of Dornock. The son of John and Miss Douglas, also John, the last Carruthers of Holmends, succeeded in 1734, and married Charlotte, daughter of Sir Robert Laurie of Maxwelton. They had seven daughters, but no son, and Holmends sold the estate to Mr Macrae.

#### THE DORMONT FAMILY.

William, the third son of John, who succeeded to Holmends in 1523, got a charter from his father of the lands of Corshopeland. His son Christopher got the lands of Hardgrave from Sir James Johnstone of Duns-kellie in 1592. He had previously in 1585, in the Holmends troop of cavalry, accompanied Lord Maxwell to Stirling, and is mentioned in the Act of Parliament enumerating the gentlemen pardoned. However, after the gift of Hardgrave, he seemed to have become a partizan of the Johnstone family, and assisted them against Lord Maxwell at the battle of Dryfe Sands in 1595. He also helped the Johnstones in the burning of Lochmaben kirk, and his name appears on the list of those pardoned. His son Francis was returned heir to his father in 1619. Francis' son John married Katherine Harris, and from their third son Robert, the late Dr Carruthers of Inverness is said to be descended. Francis' eldest son John married twice, and his only son married Miss Beil, heiress of Winterhopehead. John Carruthers died in 1722, and



was succeeded in Dormont and Winterhopehead by his son Francis, who married, in 1731, Margaret, daughter of Sir Alexander Maxwell of Monreith, but they had no family, and he left the estates to his brother William, who married Henrietta, daughter of William Aikman, Esquire of Carney. Their eldest son, William Aikman Carruthers, Esquire, was twice married. There was no issue from the first marriage, and he married secondly Mary Anne Arthington, heiress of Arthington Hall, Yorkshire. He was succeeded by the late William Thomas Carruthers, Esquire of Dormont and Arthington, who married Susan, daughter of Maclachlan of Maclachlan, and they had one son, William Francis Carruthers, of Dormont, who was also possessor of Holmends and other lands anciently belonging to his family. He married Madeline, second daughter of Frederick Turner, Esq., and their son, Major F. J. Carruthers, is now (1905) owner of the property.

#### THE DENBIE FAMILY.

William Carruthers, second son of James, laird of Holmendis, and Miss Lockhart of Lee, seems to have got Denbie from his eldest brother in 1680. He married Miss Irving, heiress of Braes, and was succeeded by his son John, who had four successors in the direct line, all called John. The last of these, the late Col. John Carruthers, had three daughters, and one of them married the late Mr Richard Hetherington, and their eldest son, Dr John Hetherington Carruthers, R.N., succeeded to the estate. It has been sold to Mr Murray of Murraythwaite.

#### THE BRAES FAMILY.

William, the second son of William Carruthers, first of Denbie, and Miss Irving of Braes, succeeded his mother in that estate. He was succeeded by his son, Captain F. Carruthers, whose son Francis sold the property to the late William Curl, Esquire. A branch of the family was settled at Wormonbie or Warmanbie, but it became extinct some years ago.

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